

**Stafford County  
Department of Economic Development  
Strategic Plan**

April 14, 2015



*Prepared for:*  
Stafford County Department of Economic Development

*Prepared by*  
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Development Strategies, LLC





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## Glossary

Acronym	Meaning
BAC	Business Advisory Committee
BoS	Stafford County Board of Supervisors
BPOL tax	Business Professional Occupational License Tax
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
BRE	Business Retention and Expansion
CDA	Community Development Authority
CDSC	Community Development Service Center
CIT Broadband	Center for Innovative Technology Broadband Service
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoD	Department of Defense
B-2-B Forums	Business to Business forums
DRS	Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
ED Department	Economic Development Department
EDA	Stafford County Economic Development Authority
FAR	Floor- area ratio
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FRA	Fredericksburg Regional Alliance
FredBus	Fredericksburg Regional Transit (Bus System)
GCC	Germanna Community College
GSA	General Services Administration
HUB Zone	Historically Underutilized Business Zone
ICSC	International Council of Shopping Centers

Acronym	Meaning
IEDC	International Economic Development Council
JLUS	Joint Land Use Study
MCBQ	Marine Corps Base Quantico
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
NoVA	Northern Virginia
PDR	Purchase of Development Rights
PTND	Planned Traditional Neighborhood Design
REPI	Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCORE	Service Corps of Retired Executives (non-profit association dedicated to helping small businesses)
SoMD	Southern Maryland (Montgomery and Prince George)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education Program
STRC Initiative	Stafford Technology and Research Center Initiative
SWOT Analysis	Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats Analysis
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
the County	Stafford County, Virginia
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TOD	Transit Oriented Development
UDA	Urban Development Area
UMW	University of Mary Washington
VALET Program	Virginia Leaders in Export Trade Program
Vantage Point	Vantage Point Economic & Transportation Development Strategies, LLC
VC	Venture Capital
VDoT	Virginia Department of Transportation
VEC	Virginia Employment Commission

GLOSSARY



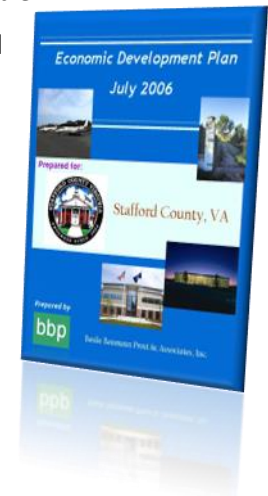
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Acronym	Meaning
VEDP	Virginia Economic Development Partnership

## Section 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

The Stafford County Board of Supervisors has a goal of providing a more desirable community with an excellent business climate, conducive to increased investment by the private sector and increased job opportunities for its citizens. In order to achieve that goal, the County engaged Vantage Point Economic Development and Transportation Strategies, LLC (Vantage Point) to update the County's 2006 Economic Development Strategic Plan. Vantage Point is a firm that specializes in strategic economic development plans and is the successor to the firm that prepared the County's 2006 Economic Development Strategic Plan.



In producing this Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan*, Vantage Point worked closely with key County departments (Economic Development and Tourism, Planning and Zoning, Finance, etc.), key County stakeholders, elected officials, educational institutions, state and County agencies, and private sector stakeholders. Various economic development and strategic planning documents were reviewed, changes in outlook for the economy and technology were examined, ongoing and proposed projects evaluated, economic conditions and development activities in competitive and comparable peer communities were reviewed and key stakeholder interviews conducted.

This *Strategic Action Plan* has been written and is being presented in four different deliverables:

- **Executive Summary:** Summary of preliminary findings and brief presentation of the objectives.
- **PowerPoint Presentation:** Presentation of the Executive Summary



- **Strategic Action Plan Report (this document):** Presents an overview of the work leading up to the development of the objectives (document review, key stakeholder interviews, peer review, best practices) and
- **Technical Appendix:** Detailed presentation of the background research and findings, full stakeholder interviews, peer community data sheets and various County documents.

## 1.2 Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to formulate a strategic economic development plan with a 5-year time horizon. The objectives were derived working closely with County representatives, and key public and private stakeholders. The objectives are based upon established project goals and objectives, available resources, competitive and comparable peer communities, best practices, and

the special characteristics of Stafford County. Economic and market conditions were examined and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the County were identified.



The economic development objectives are based upon and formulated to be consistent and compatible with current planning efforts and best practices. Furthermore, formulating the objectives involved engaging key stakeholders and economic development partners to ensure that the plan is organizationally and functionally comprehensive. Specific objectives were

identified and prioritized and measures for evaluating and monitoring progress in achieving the strategic goals and objectives were identified.





Objectives were designed to address business retention, business expansion, business recruitment, new business development, tourism and retail and related activities. For each of the objectives, roles and responsibilities were defined, costs and sources of funding identified, timelines established and measures of success formulated. Selected catalytic projects were also identified.

The findings and recommendations of this economic development strategic plan update are summarized in this report, which will be presented to and reviewed by the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the general public. Based upon this review process, the initial findings and recommendations contained in this draft report will be further refined and a final report will be prepared and presented to the Board of Supervisors for adoption into the County's Comprehensive Plan.

### **1.3 Overall Methodology**

The findings, recommendations and objectives detailed in this Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan* update come from the full body of analysis, research and information gathering, key stakeholder interviews, work sessions, and other activities carried out over a six month period. Previous planning efforts, studies and initiatives were reviewed to understand the work and effort that has occurred to date, the goals and visions represented in those efforts, and to build upon previous works to move the County quickly forward.

Over 30 key stakeholders in the community, including Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Authority members, business leaders, County staff, colleges/university representatives, and other private sector and community leaders were interviewed. These interviews sought to identify key strengths and weaknesses of the County as it relates to economic development and economic growth. The interviews also discussed emerging opportunities and impending threats.



The breadth of all of this information was synthesized and distilled into over three dozen objectives. This list was reviewed with the economic development staff and other designated key stakeholders and a refined short list of objectives was formulated. It is this list of objectives that were detailed and upon which this 2015 *Strategic Action Plan* is based.

### 1.4 Report Organization

This report is organized in four sections.

- **Section 1: Introduction**
- **Section 2: Where Are We?** Brief review of key stakeholder interviews (Board of Supervisors, EDA, County staff, education institutions, businesses, general public) previous planning efforts and the peer community review.
- **Section 3: Where Are We Going?** Identification of the direction the County should take to fully meet its economic development potential, the assessment of assets and opportunities the County can build upon and the identification of priority development areas and catalytic projects.
- **Section 4: How Will We Get There?** The final section presents specific objectives needed to implement the vision and goals.
- **Executive Summary (under separate cover):** An Executive Summary has been produced to both accompany this *Strategic Action Plan* and to be a stand-alone document.
- **Technical Appendix:** Details and documentation supporting the technical analyses.

### 1.5 Acknowledgements

This effort would not have been possible without the help, assistance and guidance of the Board of Supervisors, the Economic Development Authority, the County Administrator, numerous County Departments (Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Finance, Fire/Police, etc.), Germanna Community



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College, the University of Mary Washington and Stafford County Economic Development Department. Members of the business community and the community at-large also played a very important role in providing guidance and perspective throughout the process.

## Section 2. Where Are We Now?

### 2.1 Introduction

Vantage Point conducted a series of interviews over the course of information gathering, asset assessment and objectives development. In all, over 30 stakeholders were interviewed, and public meetings held with county residents as well. In addition, nine peer communities were reviewed and over a dozen previous reports reviewed. This section of the *Strategic Action Plan* briefly reflects upon the information and ideas gathered during those sessions and review processes. Full analysis and background information can be found in the Technical Appendix, under separate cover. For each set of interviews described below, the corresponding objective in Section 4 that it relates to is indicated. This section is organized by the source of information.

### 2.2 Board of Supervisors

Economic development activities in Stafford are directed by policy initiatives established by the governing body, the Board of Supervisors. Per State code, the Board uses a Comprehensive Plan to guide development in the County in accordance with the Board's stated objectives. In the case of economic development, the Board has adopted three specific tools: the existing *Economic Development Strategic Plan*, the *Master Redevelopment Plan* and the *Economic Development 10 Point Plan*. Economic development is clearly a priority for the Board and to ensure their full participation in this update, Board members were interviewed by the consultants to identify priorities they wished to have included in this update.

#### *Process:*

- Interview invitations were extended to all Board of Supervisors members
- Interviews lasting 1 hour were held in Stafford County offices
- Both in-person and phone-in interviews were held



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*Summary of Discussions/Findings:*

- Continue to support the Redevelopment Areas (Boswell's Corner, Courthouse Area, Falmouth Village and the Southern Gateway).
  - Objectives
    - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
    - T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
    - H-1 - Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants
    - P-1 - Explore Other Opportunity Areas for Economic Development
    - P-4 - Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations
- Continue to improve the transportation infrastructure by establishing priority economic development projects and coordinate with VDOT and FHWA regarding funding.
  - Objectives
    - T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
    - O-1 - Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95
- Continue to identify and support sites suitable for high technology data centers.
  - Objectives
    - T-1 - Implement the STRC Initiative Objective Plan



- T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
- T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
- Continue and expand public private-partnerships, including using the EDA and the Business Advisory Committee (BAC).
  - Objectives
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
    - O-3 - Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ
- Continue and enhance the small business assistance programs.
  - Objectives
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
    - H-3 - Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network
    - O-7 - Support Enhanced Coordination of K-12 → STEM → GCC → UMW
- Improve and expand economic development incentive programs to improve the County's competitive position, expand the role of the EDA and continued use of cash grant incentive programs such as those available through the Technology Zone.
  - Objective
    - T-7 - Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox
- Continue to support business retention/expansion initiatives by increasing outreach efforts and the number of on-site business visits, newsletter



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recipients, communications outlets, hosting meetings on relevant issues and events, etc.

- Objectives
  - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
  - H-3 - Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network
  - P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
- Enhance marketing efforts by engaging in cooperative/regional marketing initiatives to leverage limited resources and encourage private sector dollar investments.
  - Objectives
    - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
    - O-1 - Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95
    - O-2 - Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS
    - O-5 - Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Plan
- Establish specific guidelines to provide consistency in responding to development requests.
  - Objectives
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars



- P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
- O-4 - Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND)

### 2.3 Economic Development Authority

One of the two bodies established by the Board to assist with directing economic development activities within the County is the Economic Development Authority. EDAs are empowered by State code as independent public bodies with authority to issue revenue bonds in support of public improvement projects. EDAs can also own property, enter into agreements and conduct other activities related to economic development. To ensure their full participation in this update, EDA members were also interviewed by the consultants to identify priorities the EDA wanted included in this update.

#### *Process:*

- Consultant briefed members at a regular EDA meeting
- Focus group style meeting held immediately following the EDA meeting

#### *Members Interviewed:*

Joel Griffin <i>Garrisonville District</i>	Jo Knight <i>Aquia District</i>
Wendy E. Maurer <i>Rock Hill District</i>	Howard Owen <i>Falmouth District</i>
Jack Rowley <i>Hartwood District</i>	Mark Safferstone <i>Griffis-Widewater District</i>





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*Summary of Discussions/Findings:*

- Continue to develop a town center in the Courthouse area on Route 630 as envisioned in the Courthouse Area Redevelopment Plan, after expanding sewer capacity
  - Objective
    - T-3 Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
    - Catalytic Project
- Continue to regionalize economic development activities by partnering with FRA and VEDP. Site selection specialists like to work with regional entities.
  - Objective
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
- Continue to formulate specific policies, guidelines and criteria for offering incentives.
  - Objective
    - T-7 - Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox
- Continue to target Washington DC Metropolitan Area businesses.
  - Objective
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
- Continue to work to attract high quality retail enterprises, particularly white tablecloth restaurants.
  - Objective
    - H-1 - Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants



- Work to cluster related businesses – defense/government contractors, in northern Stafford; southern Stafford more livable amenities, "centers for excellence".
  - Objectives
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
    - O-2 - Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS
    - O-3 - Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ
- Increase private sector support and funding for economic development initiatives.
  - Objective
    - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites

## 2.4 Stafford County Staff interviews

### *Process:*

- Interview invitations were extended to County staff
- Interviews lasting 1 hour were held in Stafford County offices

### *Members Interviewed:*

County Administration	Economic Development & Tourism
Finance	Planning & Zoning
Public Works	Utilities

### *Summary of Discussions/Findings:*

- Improve data collection, organization and access to the inventory of available commercial and industrial sites.



- Objectives
  - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
  - T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
- Continue to implement form-based codes and neo-traditional neighborhood development zoning.
  - Objectives
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars
    - P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
    - O-4 - Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND)
- Expand Community Development Service Center offerings as a one-stop shop for land development and permitting.
  - Objective
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars
    - P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
- Provide adequate water and sewer services to otherwise shovel-ready commercial and industrial sites.
  - Objectives
    - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites



- T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
- Expand the marketing program to improve the County's competitive position.
  - Objective
    - P-5 - Evaluate Economic Development Staffing
- Advance the Courthouse and Aquia Town Center mixed-use walkable communities.
  - Objectives
    - H-1 - Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants
    - Catalytic Projects
- Formulate formal incentive programs.
  - Objective
    - T-7 - Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox
- Continue work to diversify the economy using the STRC and emphasizing high-tech jobs and businesses.
  - Objectives
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars
    - O-2 - Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS
    - O-3 - Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ



- Consider reducing up front application fees for commercial and industrial projects.
  - Objectives
    - P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
    - O-4 - Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND)

## 2.5 Business/Education/Community Key Stakeholder Interviews

### *Process:*

- A variety of Business/Education/Community key stakeholders were invited to participate in interviews regarding economic development in the County
- Individual and group interviews were held in the Economic Development office

### *Members Interviewed:*

Patrick A'Hearn <i>Riverside Dinner Theater</i>	Brian Baker <i>University of Mary Washington</i>
Dan Choike <i>USMC Colonel Retired</i>	Gary Evans <i>Axcel Innovation</i>



Katy Grove <i>Greencore</i>	Jud Honaker <i>The Silver Companies</i>
Theresa Livelsberger <i>GEICO</i>	Charles McDaniel <i>Hilldrup Moving and Storage</i>
Matt McLaren <i>VA Economic Development Partnership</i>	Curry Roberts <i>Fredericksburg Regional Alliance</i>
Dr. David Sam <i>Germanna Community College</i>	Ed Wallis <i>Stafford Regional Airport Authority</i>
Dr. Jeanne Wesley <i>Germanna Community College</i>	

*Summary of Discussions/Findings:*

- Provide specialized concierge services for businesses.
  - Objective
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
- Provide expanded meetings/conferences outside of hotels.
  - Objective
    - P-1 - Explore Other Opportunity Areas for Economic Development
    - P-4 - Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations
- Expand business resources and training tools.
  - Objectives
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars



- H-3 - Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network
- P-5 - Evaluate Economic Development Staffing
- Address existing business needs and issues, particularly as they relate to technology, lab space, cyber security, and IT.
  - Objective
    - T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
- Help create additional shovel-ready commercial and industrial sites.
  - Objective
    - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
- Address building code issues which restrict implementing higher density zoning.
  - Objective
    - O-4 - Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND)
- Provide a written policy for expedited development project review and approval.
  - Objective
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars
    - P-2 - Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue
- Support University of Mary Washington/Germanna Community College workforce development efforts such as a hub of excellence. Create interactive campus atmospheres.



- Objectives
  - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
  - O-6 - Develop a Hub of Innovation through GCC/UMW
  - O-7 - Support Enhanced Coordination of K-12 → STEM → GCC → UMW
- Create a town center around the Courthouse/new Germanna Campus.
  - Objective
    - P-4 - Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations
    - Catalytic Project
- Build upon regional business attraction efforts, including cluster analysis, findings.
  - Objective
    - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
- Work with startup businesses reflecting new workplace and workforce needs.
  - Objectives
    - T-4 - Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
    - T-5 - Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas
    - H-2 - Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars
    - H-3 - Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network





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- Find and encourage partners in larger non-residential developments. Encourage cost sharing with developers through tax increment financing, service district, community development authority, etc., for critical existing permitted, but stalled, sites to provide needed public infrastructure.
    - Objectives
      - T-2 - Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
      - T-3 - Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
      - T-5 - Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas
  - Expand the Stafford Opportunity Fund. Funding is currently limited in the budget and not assured from one year to the next. Establish specific criteria for funding.
    - Objective
      - T-7 - Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox
  - Focus on Washington DC Metropolitan Area using VEDP incentives.
    - Objective
      - T-6 - Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
  - Provide alternative forms of incentives.
    - Objective
      - T-7 - Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox



## 2.6 Open House Forum on Retail and Restaurants

### Process:

- Public meeting was widely announced and held in Board Chambers
- A brief presentation on the status of the Strategic Plan and related retail efforts to date was given
- Open floor discussion with Stafford staff taking notes
- Key comments shared in real time on social media (Twitter, Facebook)

### Participants Included:

Tim Baroody <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>	Meg Bohmke <i>BoS Falmouth District</i>
Jack Cavalier <i>BoS Griffis-Widewater District</i>	Rick Cobert <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>
Kelly Copley <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>	Brad Johnson <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>
Sarah Kirkpatrick <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>	Paul Milde <i>BoS Aquia District</i>
M. C. Moncure <i>Economic Development &amp; Tourism</i>	Howard Owen <i>EDA Falmouth District</i>
Anthony Romanello <i>County Administration</i>	Laura Sellers <i>BoS Garrisonville District</i>
General Public <i>50+ attendees</i>	Email Comments <i>30+ received</i>

### Summary of Discussions/Findings:

- Desire for quality upscale retail and restaurant choices.
- Quality restaurants focusing on non-national operators.

- Harris Teeter, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods.
- Emphasize sports, entertainment and family venues.
- Independent art community elements.
- Create mixed-use town center (Courthouse and Aquia Town Center)





<p><b>Desired Restauranters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bertucci's</li> <li>○ Bascilicos</li> <li>○ Cheddars</li> <li>○ Cheesecake Factory</li> <li>○ Dave and Busters</li> <li>○ Drive-thru Coffee shop (Starbucks)</li> <li>○ Famous Dave's</li> <li>○ Great American</li> <li>○ IHOP</li> <li>○ Olive Garden</li> <li>○ Outback Steakhouse</li> <li>○ Sonic</li> <li>○ Sweetwater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Desired Retailers</li> <li>○ Bass Pro Shop</li> <li>○ Barnes &amp; Noble</li> <li>○ Garden Ridge</li> <li>○ Marquis movie theater</li> <li>○ Michaels</li> <li>○ Nordstroms</li> <li>○ Pottery Barn</li> <li>○ REI/Sports Authority</li> <li>○ Talbots</li> <li>○ The Loft</li> <li>○ TJ Maxx</li> <li>○ Williams-Sonoma</li> </ul>
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<p><b><u>Desired Big Box/Grocers</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Costco</li> <li>○ Harris Teeter</li> <li>○ Kroger</li> <li>○ Sam's Club</li> <li>○ Trader Joes</li> <li>○ Costco</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Other</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Baseball team</li> <li>○ Bigger venues</li> <li>○ Comedy club</li> <li>○ Entertainment lure</li> <li>○ Family bowling</li> <li>○ Gym/fitness center</li> <li>○ Independent art community</li> </ul>
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<u>Desired Big Box/Grocers (con't)</u>	<u>Other (con't)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sam's Club</li> <li>○ Wegmans</li> <li>○ Whole Foods</li> <li>○ World Market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New stadium</li> <li>○ Racetrack</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Peer County Review

### *Process:*

A survey was developed and sent to the Economic Development departments of nine local governments. These nine local governments included the six local governments we traditionally compare ourselves to, plus three other local governments with whom we often compete.

- All nine communities returned their surveys and they are included in the Technical Appendix.
- Categories addressed in the surveys included:
  - Primary department functions
  - Secondary (“other”) departmental functions
  - Number of staff (present and three years ago)
  - Staff positions (titles/roles)
  - Annual budget (present and three years ago)
  - Target industries
  - Incentives
  - Financing Programs
  - BPOL tax (yes or no)
  - Economic Development marketing “hook” (motto and key draws)
  - Economic Development Plans (currently utilized)
  - Affiliated Economic Development agencies/organizations
  - Website and usage features



*Peer Communities Analyzed:*

Albemarle County*	Fairfax County
Fauquier County*	Hanover County*
Henrico County	King George County
Loudoun County*	Prince William County*
Spotsylvania County*	

\* Traditional Comparison Counties

*Summary of Discussions/Findings:*

A primary finding of the survey was that peer economic development departments varied widely in the number of staff, departmental responsibilities, budgets, the complexities of their incentives programs and the number of targeted industries. A basic comparison is offered below:

- **Population:** Stafford County has the fifth largest population of the selected communities with a population of approximately 136,000 residents.
- **Employment:** Stafford County ranks seventh in total at-place employment.
- **Target Industries:** Targeted industries varied greatly, but also often overlapped. Some counties identified shorter, more focused lists while others had much larger and broader lists. Targeted industries for Stafford County include defense, research, technology and higher education. Eight of the nine peer communities also identified technology and related manufacturing as a targeted industry and four also identified defense. However, no peer communities identified higher education as a targeted industry.
- **Staffing:** Economic development staff sizes ranged from 46 employees in Fairfax County to just one employee in King George County. Stafford has 4½ employees dedicated to economic development.



- **Incentives:** As with staffing, the number of targeted industries and budgets, comparing available incentives is not clear cut. For example, while the peer communities have formalized incentive programs, Stafford employs a much more flexible program based upon the Stafford Opportunity Fund. The BPOL tax is another major divider in that all of the nine peers have a BPOL tax and Stafford does not. Stafford relies on the flexibility of the Stafford Opportunity Fund and the direct tax advantage of no BPOL tax to help induce interested businesses to select Stafford.

## 2.8 Previous reports

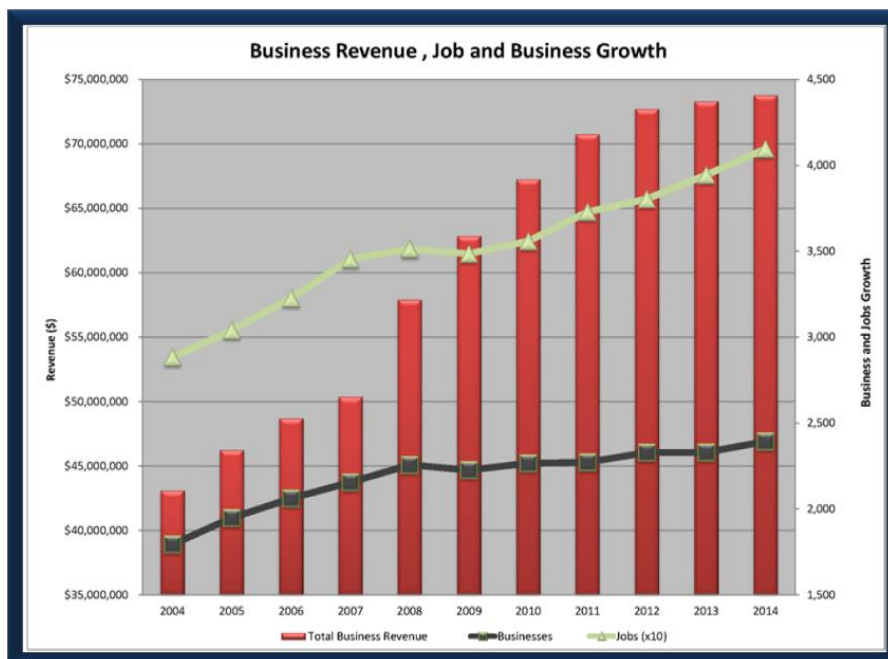
Over a dozen previous economic development, planning, infrastructure and other related plans, reports and studies were reviewed in the preparation of this Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan*. These plans, listed below, are summarized in the Technical Appendix. Many of the plans reviewed cover topics and subject matter outside the scope of economic development or this Strategic Plan. We have evaluated the following twelve (12) reports for relevant information specific to economic development to build on and leverage the past efforts for this Stafford County Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan*.

- The Economic Development 10 Point Plan
- STRC Risk Assessment and Strategic Plan
- The Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030 including elements:
  - The Master Redevelopment Plan
  - The Land Use Plan
  - The Telecommunications Plan
  - The Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities Plan
  - The Bike Trail Map
  - The Retail Attraction & Marketing Study
  - The Data Center Initiative
  - The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

- The Regional Cluster Analysis
- Falmouth Master Interpretive Plan

## 2.9 Economic Progress

Over the past ten years, the trends for total business revenue, total number of businesses and the total number of jobs in Stafford have all been on the rise. Total business revenue in the County has increased by about 70%, the total number of businesses in the County has increased by about 25% and the total number of jobs has increased by almost 40%; all this while the rest of Virginia and the Nation as a whole were in the depths of a recession. Stafford did not make it through the recession unscathed, as shown in the figure below, 2008-2009 showed slight declines in the number of businesses and jobs, but business revenue continued to grow and the County rebounded quickly.





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## Section 3. Where Are We Going?

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous section described the current economic conditions in Stafford County by recapping the 30 key stakeholder interviews, identifying the previous planning efforts, and looking at peer communities. This section of the *Strategic Action Plan* begins with the identification of community goals and visions for economic development that came out of the previous planning efforts, key stakeholder interviews, and public engagement sessions.

This section also describes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that will either be built upon or overcome. A SWOT analysis is a bridge between where Stafford is now and the issues that currently influence economic development (strengths and weaknesses) and a forward looking view of the future Stafford can achieve once the issues that will need to be addressed (opportunities and threats) are covered.

This section concludes with a focus forward and a look to the opportunities identified in priority focus areas. Two areas, Aquia Town Center and the Courthouse Redevelopment Area's Southeast Quadrant, are called out for more in-depth analysis and are designated Catalytic projects. For each of these catalytic projects, a development program, and funding strategy will be drafted with the focus on the



iterative process for establishing estimated development levels needed to support the public sector investments and the type and level of public incentives

that may be required to support the development of the project areas. The catalytic project work is somewhat independent of the rest of the *Strategic Action Plan* work and will be prepared under separate cover.

### 3.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The SWOT analysis presented below is an aggregation from the review of previous planning efforts, key stakeholder interviews, and existing conditions analysis.

#### *Strengths*

- Location (along the I-95 Corridor)
- Economic development momentum
- Undefined comprehensive incentives program (the County does have a Tech Zone and a flexible Opportunity Fund)
- High quality of life
- Low relative cost of living and housing cost
- MCBQ/FBI/DHS
- Stafford Regional Airport
- Educated workforce
- Strong community college/workforce training
- STAR Research Initiative / Quantico Corporate Center
- I-95 HOT Lanes



#### *Weaknesses*

- Location (more removed from DC/NoVA)
- Utility capacity, especially in some commercial areas
- Transportation/congestion
- Permitting process (although improving)



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- Perception of being a rural “bedroom community”
  - Not always perceived as business friendly
  - Limited shovel-ready sites
  - Lack of upscale retail and restaurants
  - Undefined comprehensive incentives program (the County's is not strictly defined therefore it is difficult for interested businesses to assess the program's merits without contacting the department directly)
  - Broadband access and availability is not countywide
  - Dependence on the Federal government
  - Underutilization of natural amenities (i.e. the waterfront)

#### *Opportunities*

- Five I-95 Interchanges (includes Exit 148)
- STRC Initiative
- Dark fiber availability
- High quality of life
- Industry cluster analysis
- Diversity in the economy
- Aquia Town Center Redevelopment
- Courthouse Area (Stafford Hospital area)
- Germanna Community College Campus
- Managed residential development
- Entertainment offerings in place with theaters, historic sites and waterfront amenities
- The Community Development Service Center (CDSC)
- FredBus for intra-county transportation
- Multiple crossings of the Rappahannock River



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### *Threats*

- Possible tax/revenue impacts of residential growth
- Possible impacts from future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions on MCBQ
- Near-term DoD funding declines and related impact on Stafford based contractors
- Increased competition as a result of NoVA commercial vacancies

### **3.3 Regional Cooperation**

As noted previously regional cooperation is a key aspect of economic development organization best practices. Increasing national and global economic trends have businesses and site selection consultants looking at regions. The initial question is not about selecting a specific community or site but rather a state or region. Economic development decision-makers are often looking first at regional resources and thus Stafford is compared to the Williamsburg, Richmond, Charlottesville and Hampton regional areas.

Virginia works through 18 regional alliances that connect 95 counties and 38 cities. Stafford County, as part of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance (City of Fredericksburg, Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford Counties) is in an excellent position to benefit given its land resources and attributes vis-à-vis other members of the alliance. This creates a strong marketing opportunity as it relates to the Washington DC Metropolitan Area and the national market.

### **3.4 Overall Goals for the Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan***

This section briefly describes the overall goals for this Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan*. These goals have been identified from the research completed to this point and are specific to economic development within the County and not necessarily larger community-wide issues.



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- **Goal 1:** Continue to expand business growth and employment becoming a more progressive center of employment within the greater Washington DC Metropolitan Area.
  - **Goal 2:** Accelerate infrastructure upgrades serving critical commercial and industrial sites.
  - **Goal 3:** Continue to seek new and upscale retail and restaurants within the County both to attract new development and to enhance the quality of life of County residents.
  - **Goal 4:** Continue to build and support technology and entrepreneurship growth and fully support the STRC Initiative to retain and grow high-tech jobs and businesses.
  - **Goal 5:** Continue Redevelopment Area programs focusing on creating a sense of place.
  - **Goal 6:** Leverage and grow the medical/allied health care base.
  - **Goal 7:** Focus the County's objectives and continue to be more proactive in building an enviable community.
  - **Goal 8:** Promote economic development and business expansion while living the Comprehensive Plan's vision of preserving rural land outside of the growth area.
  - **Goal 9:** Consider available and appropriate riverfront areas in the County for compatible commercial development.
  - **Goal 10:** Continue progress improving the overall development review and permitting processes, keeping taxes low, in an effort to further our "business friendly community" goals.



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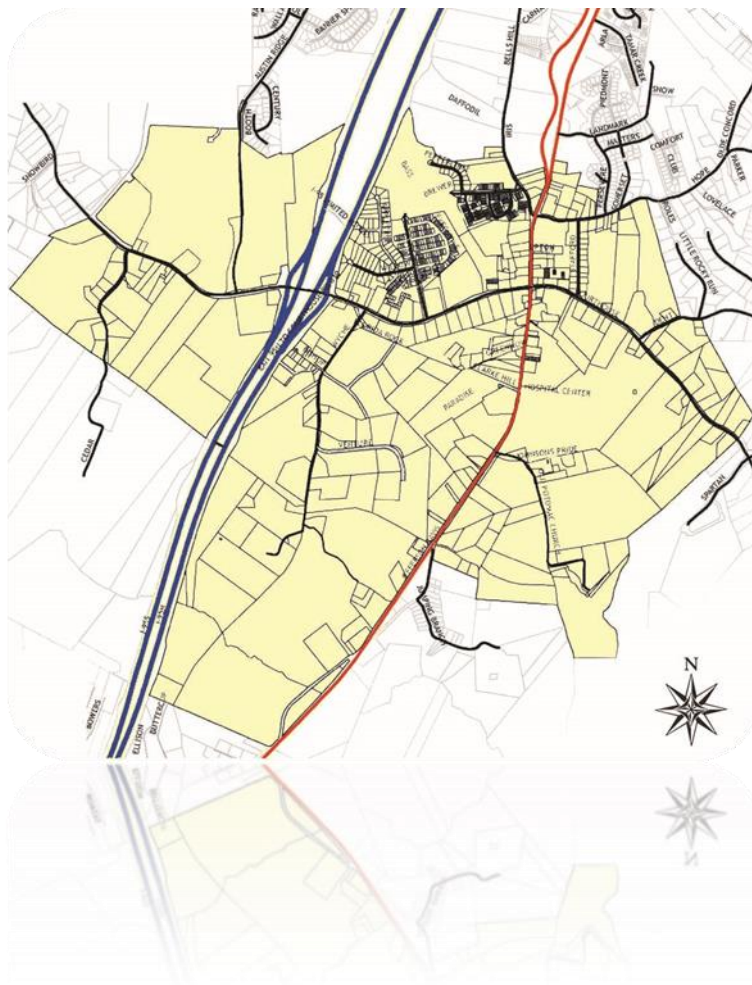
### 3.5 Priority Focus Areas

There are many opportunity project areas located throughout the County that will need to be addressed as market conditions warrant and Economic Development Department resources allow. Resources need to be prudently allocated. The *Strategic Action Plan* focused on two catalytic projects that have the most immediate impact on economic development and economic growth in Stafford, Aquia Town Center and the Courthouse Redevelopment Area's Southeast Quadrant. For each of these catalytic projects, a detailed development pro-forma will be described, key steps presented and roles and responsibilities described. These catalytic projects are currently being investigated and detailed and will be presented at a later date under separate cover.

However, the detailed Objectives presented in Section 4 are not just tied to these two catalytic project areas, but they are also overarching efforts that, when implemented, will advance economic development throughout the County, including the four Redevelopment Areas, as well as two other focus areas identified during the interviews. These areas are summarized below:

- **Boswells Corner Redevelopment Area:** Boswell's Corner has come a long way since the Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 2011. BRAC resulted in over 3,000 new jobs coming to Stafford and being placed in a new 700,000+ square-foot office building on MCBQ, Quantico Corporate Center has almost 500,000 square feet of Class A office space open (about ½ of its planned buildout), the Technology and Research Center initiative has started, \$4M of infrastructure improvements at US-1 and Rt-637 are almost complete, almost \$1M has been spent on preliminary engineering for improvements to US-1, high-occupancy-toll (HOT) lanes have been opened to traffic. This is one of the hottest economic development areas in the County.

- **Courthouse Area Redevelopment Area:** The Courthouse Area, which houses the government complex and the historic Courthouse Building, is a significant center of activity. The addition of Courthouse renovations, the new Public Safety Building and the Stafford Hospital complex, serve to strengthen this trend. With a location centered at the intersection of Courthouse Road (Rt-630) and Jefferson Davis Highway (US-1), a mile from Interstate 95 (I-95), increased development will bring additional workers and visitors. However, despite this expansion, the Courthouse Area does not currently have sufficient amenities to serve as a legitimate urban center, lacking necessary services such as outdoor gathering spaces and retail to support or promote increases in pedestrian



traffic. Given the mix of land ownership and the level of overall development planning already underway, the southeast quadrant of the Courthouse Redevelopment Area was designated one of the two catalytic projects associated with this *Strategic Action Plan*, discussed later in this document.





- ***Falmouth Village Redevelopment Area:*** Much has also happened in Falmouth since the Redevelopment Plan was adopted just four years ago. A \$20M reconstruction of the intersection of US-1 and US-17 is well underway and scheduled to be completed by Fall 2015; as a result of this work, VDOT funded a Master Interpretive Plan to identify ways to enhance awareness of Falmouth's history; the County has completed construction of the Belmont-Ferry Farm Trail through Falmouth and upgraded facilities at the Historic Port of Falmouth; and the County and VDOT are actively negotiating other opportunities to advance the heritage tourism destination envisioned in Falmouth's land use plans.
  
- ***Southern Gateway Redevelopment Area:*** The Southern Gateway is a large intense commercial area adjacent to US-17 with the advantage of visibility from I-95. As such, its development potential and avenues for expansion are already clear. It serves two major roles. First, it is an existing commercial center with existing water and sewer capacity and major roadway upgrades already underway. Second, it supports historic Falmouth village. Due to its relatively small building scale, historic setting and sensitive archeological, architectural, and natural resources, development supporting historic Falmouth village needs to be located within the Southern Gateway Redevelopment Area. Falmouth Village benefits from its adjacency to the intersection of Jefferson Davis Highway (US-1) and Warrenton Road (US-17); however, this relationship also places a strain on the district by physically bifurcating it. The Southern Gateway Redevelopment Area is close enough to Falmouth to provide a convenient location for commercial activity support Falmouth without endangering historical resources still existent within the Village and the Bottom.





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- ***The Warrenton Road (US-17) Corridor (I-95 to US-1):*** The Warrenton Road (US-17) corridor connects the Falmouth and Southern Gateway Redevelopment Areas and provides the physical and economic transition between the modern developing economic center at Southern Gateway and the historic visitor and recreational and cultural attractions in Falmouth Village. The character of the Southern Gateway, with its retail, commercial and hotel development areas, adds to a continuous physical and economic transition between the two Redevelopment Areas along Warrenton Road (US-17). The County should consider expanding the two Redevelopment Areas to encompass this area.
  
  - ***Aquia Town Center:*** Aquia Town Center is a private redevelopment project located along Jefferson Davis Highway, near Garrisonville Road, and I-95 Exit 143. This project has the potential to transform the remains of a community shopping center site into an exciting mixed-use development. Located just five miles from Quantico Corporate Center and nearby MCBQ, the Aquia Town Center is ideally positioned for success. With one attractive Class-A office building already open and operating, proposed redevelopment of the Town Center offers commercial opportunities that will enhance the quality of life in the County. This is why this is the second of this Plan's two catalytic projects.
  
  - ***Waterfront Development:*** Stafford County has not effectively tapped its waterfront amenities for appropriate commercial (restaurant/retail) development on the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. This is in large part because of the significant amount of waterfront frontage that is in conservation districts. Many of the waterfront sites that are not in conservations districts are underserved by road and utility infrastructure. A balanced Rappahannock and Potomac River conversation is needed to explore options for opening up the waterfront to appropriate and attractive high end restaurants that seek unique



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locations, niche retail, marinas and other complementary uses thereby providing the County with a unique economic development opportunity. Working with private land owners and pulling together public-private development packages will be key steps to accessing the waterfront.

- **Centerport Parkway Area:** The Centerport Parkway Area is a unique asset that sets Stafford apart from many of the peer communities. The area includes an airport that is in the process of lengthening its runway to allow for enhanced airport use. Appropriate and compatible development around the airport is also currently under study. Development in this area can increase the variety of available sites and provide immediate access to corporate clients in need of immediate air or I-95 access.

## Section 4. How Do We Get There?

### 4.1 Introduction

This section of the *Strategic Action Plan* details the Economic Development Objectives that will achieve the previously defined goals. These Objectives are based upon the evaluation, analysis and interviews discussed above and the competitive environment within which the County operates.

### 4.2 Phases of Implementation of the *Strategic Action Plan*

Because of the constantly changing and evolving conditions intrinsic to the U. S. economy that Stafford will be faced with, it will be important to revisit and reevaluate the objectives in this *Strategic Action Plan* on a regular basis. Therefore, this *Strategic Action Plan* recommends a three phase implementation of its recommendations as described below and on the graphic on the following page. After each phase of implementation, the County staff, Board of Supervisors, EDA, and other key stakeholders should reassess the priority of the recommendations, their timing and objective for implementation. An economic development plan is a living document that must be reviewed and revisited often as market and economic changes occur, at least once a year; more if conditions warrant.

- **Years 1 to 3:** Initiate and carry out the short-term recommendations.
  - Monitor and benchmark the effectiveness/success along the way
- **Years 4 to 5:** Hold a “Decision Point” session to review the results of the short-term and plan for the implementation of the mid-term recommendations.
  - Re-rank (if necessary) the Mid-term Recommendations
  - Initiate and carry out the Mid-term Recommendations
- **Years 5+:** Reinitiate objective implementation of the revised list of short-term recommendations.

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### 4.3 Economic Development Goals and Objectives

The Goals and their corresponding Objectives are shown below. Each objective is classified as either a Top Priority (T), a High Priority (H), a Priority (P), or an Other (O) action. Objectives with an asterisk (\*) were developed in discussion with the Board of Supervisors during the key stakeholder interview process.

*Goal 1: Continue to expand business growth and employment becoming a more progressive center of employment within the greater Washington DC Metropolitan Area.*

Objective T-4\*: Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective T-6\*: Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective P-4\*: Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective O-1\*: Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95; *Lead Entity*: Public Works Department.

Objective O-5\*: Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Plan; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

*Goal 2: Accelerate infrastructure upgrades serving critical commercial and industrial sites.*

Objective T-2\*: Continue to Increase Shovel-Ready sites; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective T-3: Enhance Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development, Public Works, and the Utilities Departments.

Objective T-5: Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective P-2\*: Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue and the Business Community; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

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*Goal 3: Continue to seek new and upscale retail and restaurants within the County both to attract new development and to enhance the quality of life of County residents.*

Objective H-1\*: Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development Authority and Economic Development Department.

Objective P-4\*: Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective O-5\*: Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Plan; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

*Goal 4: Continue to build and support technology and entrepreneurship growth and fully support the STRC Initiative to retain and grow high-tech jobs and businesses.*

Objective T-1\*: Implement the STRC Initiative Objective Plan; *Lead Entity*: STRC Board of Directors.

Objective T-6\*: Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective H-3: Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network; *Lead Entities*: University of Mary Washington Small Business Development Center, and the Economic Development Department.

Objective O-2: Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department and MCBQ.

Objective O-3\*: Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development Department and the Chamber of Commerce.

Objective O-6: Develop a Hub of Innovation through GCC/UMW and Others; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development Department and Germanna Community College.

Objective O-7\*: Support Enhanced Coordination of K-12, STEM, GCC, UMW; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development Department and Stafford Public Schools.

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*Goal 5: Continue Redevelopment Area programs focusing on creating a sense of place.*

Objective T-2\*: Continue to Increase Shovel-Ready sites; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective T-3: Enhance Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development, Public Works, and the Utilities Departments.

Objective T-4\*: Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective T-5: Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective T-6\*: Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective H-1\*: Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants; *Lead Entities*: Economic Development Authority and Economic Development Department.

Objective P-2\*: Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue and the Business Community; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective P-4\*: Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

Objective O-1\*: Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95; *Lead Entity*: Public Works Department.

Objective O-5\*: Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Plan; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.

*Goal 6: Leverage and grow the medical/allied health care base.*

Objective T-6\*: Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts; *Lead Entity*: Economic Development Department.



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*Goal 7: Focus the County's objectives and continue to be more proactive in building an enviable community.*

Objective T-5: Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas;

*Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective T-7: Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox; *Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department and Planning & Zoning Department.

Objective H-2\*: Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars; *Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective P-5\*: Evaluate Economic Development Staffing; *Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective P-1\*: Explore Other Opportunity Areas for Economic Development; *Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective P-3: Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Website; *Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective O-4: Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND); *Lead Entities:* Planning & Zoning Department and Economic Development Department.

*Goal 8: Promote economic development and business expansion while living the Comprehensive Plan's vision of preserving rural land outside of the growth area.*

Objective T-5: Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas;

*Lead Entity:* Economic Development Department.

Objective T-7: Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox; *Lead Entities:* Economic Development Department and Planning & Zoning Department.

*Goal 9: Consider available and appropriate riverfront areas in the County for compatible commercial development.*

Objective T-7: Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox; *Lead Entities:* Economic Development Department and Planning & Zoning Department.

*Goal 10: Continue progress improving the overall development review and permitting processes, keeping taxes low, in an effort to further our “business friendly community” goals.*

**Objective T-7:** Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox; *Lead Entities:* Economic Development Department and Planning & Zoning Department.

#### 4.4 Components of the Economic Development Objectives

Based on the economic conditions analysis, document review, key stakeholder interviews (including the Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Authority), peer community, and Best Practice reviews, a long list of preliminary objectives were identified for inclusion in this Economic Development *Strategic Action Plan*. This long list was then vetted with the Economic Development Department staff and designated stakeholders and those objectives that remained were recommended for inclusion in the *Strategic Action Plan*. Some of those objectives that were eliminated were either already underway, had already been completed, or were deemed not appropriate for Stafford County.

The objectives below are qualified in two ways: level of priority and time frame. The paragraphs below describe the criteria related to the levels of priority and list the objectives within each priority classification. This section concludes with a discussion of time frame and the criteria used to assign each objective.







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#### 4.4.1 Priority Level

Each Objective is classified as a Top Priority, High Priority, Priority, or Other Objective. Each of the Objectives is important to the continued growth and success of Stafford County's economic prosperity. However, in order for the Economic Development Department and other County staff to most efficiently allocate their limited staff and budget resources, this *Strategic Action Plan* has further organized the prioritized Objectives by a recommended implementation time frame.

#### 4.4.2 Time Frame

The Objectives in the *Strategic Action Plan* are also categorized into short-term, mid-term and long-term implementation time frames based upon the definitions provided below:

- **Short-term (1-2 years):** Short-term recommendations either have significant or immediate impacts or serve as the foundation for implementation of mid-term or long-term recommendations. Short-term recommendations can generally be accomplished in one-to-two years, in conjunction with others, and within the limits of existing County resources. *The short-term recommendations have been prioritized and addressed accordingly in the text below.*
- **Mid-term (2-5 years):** Mid-term recommendations have positive benefits, but do not have the immediacy of short-term recommendations. These recommendations would require significant support from other entities to implement, require a higher level of time commitment and may require expertise not currently provided by Stafford County. *Mid-term and long-term recommendations are not in priority order.*
- **Long-term (5+ years):** Long-term goals would result in long term positive benefits in the region however they require substantial commitment from others to implement. These recommendations are important to the overall economic development strength and growth of the County, but will have the least immediate and direct impact on the community. Nonetheless, the recommendations are important long term projects that will contribute to

economic prosperity in the Stafford County. They are considered long-term goals only within the context of the other recommendations, not as individual recommendations.

#### *4.4.3 Components of the Detailed Objective Write-up*

Each Objective below follows a consistent outline that begins with an introduction and overall purpose of the Objective, followed by a brief description of the overall approach and desired outcomes. Following this overview, the Objectives are detailed with an identification of the lead and support entities, activities of each, time and budget implications, and metrics. The Objectives present the first important kick-off steps to implementation and not necessarily a comprehensive listing of everything that will need to be done. Such a detailed list is not practical due to changing economic conditions that will inevitably occur post production and after approval of this *Strategic Action Plan*. Where it is appropriate, important summary background information is provided for the Objectives, with detailed additional information presented in the appendices. This general outline is laid out as follows:

- **Introduction/Overview:** Overview of the Purpose, Need and Benefit of the Objective.
- **Origin:** The objectives below were generated through interviews with the Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, County staff and other key stakeholders, as well as the review of previous planning efforts and peer communities, or are an accepted best economic development practice. The origin or origins of each objective will be listed here.
- **Priority/Timing:** The priority and timing of implementation of the Objective will be listed here.
- **Approach Overview:** A quick overview of the approach to carrying out the Objective, in summary form.
- **Optimum Outcome:** The desired outcomes and results of a successfully implemented Objective.



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- **Lead Entity:** Identification of the County department, agency or entity responsible for taking the lead in implementing the Objective. This does not necessarily mean they will do all of the work, but they will be responsible for overall organization, coordination and tracking of progress.
  - **Activities of the Lead Entity:** This describes the initial “start-up” activities of the lead entity. It is not intended to be a comprehensive set of steps but rather a kick-off To-Do list for the Objective.
  - **Support Entities:** Identification of the County departments, agencies or other entities that will provide important support to the lead in implementing the Objective. This can include attending meetings, participating in community engagement, providing data/information or otherwise supporting the effort.
  - **Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** This describes the initial “start-up” activities of the support entity/entities. As with the Lead entity, this is not intended to be a comprehensive set of steps but a set of actions needed to support the Objective.
  - **Time Commitment:** Time commitment refers to the amount of staff time needed to implement the Objective and it is given in one of three categories: 1) Low, 2) Moderate and 3) High, as follows:
    - Low: less than 1 person day per month (8 hours over the course of the month)
    - Moderate: between 1 person day and 5 person days per month
    - High: more than 5 person days per month
  - **Additional Staff:** Whether this action will be intensive enough to warrant additional staff to carry out the action.
  - **Budget Implications:** Budget Implications are given in three categories: 1) Low, 2) Moderate and 3) High, as follows:
    - Low: typically only staff cost, utilizing existing staff resources

- **Moderate:** will have budget implications beyond staff costs, but not considerable. Costs would include, but not be limited to: meeting costs, room rental, marketing materials (brochures, flyers, web updates), etc.
  - **High:** will have significant budget implications and will require funds to carry out the activity. This could include incentives, infrastructure assistance, financing/funding of public improvements.
- **Variables:** This category is a general category that depends upon the methodology of the Objective, the key players and other factors.
  - **Existing Conditions:** As noted above, some of the Objectives in this *Strategic Action Plan* will only be possible after earlier Objectives have been implemented.
  - **Measures/metrics:** Preliminary identification of measures of success. For each Objective, the measures and metrics will need to be revisited and adjusted on a regular basis, based on the activities of the effort and changing needs and priorities of the County going forward.

## 4.5 Economic Development Objectives

The Objectives detailed in this section present the most important and timely actions needed to continue the hard work and build upon the successes of the Stafford County economic development team, and their partners (regional entities, state agencies, educational institutions). As the previous sections have detailed, much good work has already been accomplished and by carrying out these objectives, additional successes can be achieved. Objectives noted with an asterisk (\*) were raised or discussed by a Board of Supervisors (BoS) member during the key stakeholder interview process.

### 4.5.1 Top Priority Objectives

These objective recommendations should be acted on first and will have the greatest immediate impact on enhancing economic development in the County. Many of these objectives build upon important existing conditions for future successes. Top priority objectives include:

Objective	Description
Objective T-1*	Implement the STRC Initiative Objective Plan
Objective T-2*	Continue to Increase Awareness of Shovel-Ready sites
Objective T-3	Enhanced Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites
Objective T-4*	Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts
Objective T-5	Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in the Redevelopment Areas
Objective T-6*	Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts
Objective T-7	Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox

*Note: Not ranked in priority order.*

*Objective T-1\*: Implement the STRC Initiative Objective Plan*



**Introduction/Overview:** Department of Defense (DoD) contractor base will continue to be an important economic development driver. This objective is an important first step in fully activating the STRC Initiative and leveraging the MCBQ/DoD base in Stafford County. This is a comprehensive objective that fully leverages the

research and technology assets of the MCBQ, area DoD contractors, university research/technology strengths, and the technology company base in the greater Stafford region.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors interviews, developers/brokers, and staff.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Mid-term.



**Approach Overview:** The STRC Board of Directors recently completed a Risk Assessment and a Strategic Plan using funds from the Virginia FACT grant program. The Strategic Plan includes a series of recommendations for bringing the STRC to reality. The STRC should actively implement those recommendations.

**Optimum Outcome:** A fully functioning research center.

**Lead Entity:** STRC Board of Directors.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:** Implement the recommendations of the STRC Strategic Plan.

**Support Entities:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Administrative support to the STRC Board.

**Time Commitment:** Low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low, near term and high, long term.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** The STRC is already operational on a limited basis.

**Measures/Metrics:** Successful implementation of the STRC Strategic Plan recommendations.

[Objective T-2\\*. Continue to Increase Shovel-Ready Sites](#)

**Introduction/Overview:** Developers and businesses looking to locate or expand in the current business development environment, now more than ever before, require fast action and shovel-ready sites with minimal constraints and impediments. This renewed haste is borne from the recent Recession, the lack of quality business deals that were available, and the heavy risk of investment. With the improving economy, the private development community is now reengaging in development projects and it needs to move quickly to get deals done. Stafford County needs to have a well-documented inventory of shovel-ready sites that are ready for development with infrastructure to the site and an owner/agent willing to sell the site or participate in the development of the site. The Economic Development Department can facilitate and support this activity, but at the end of the day the majority of commercial buildings and sites in the County are in private ownership and thus engaging those private owners must be part of the process. The benefit of this objective is to further support the business friendly



perception of the County, to make Stafford more attractive to business expansion and new business attraction and to be ready for large development deals that typically have short development timelines. As the development levels increase, the County will then be more attractive to regional and national tenants as the rise in development activity shows the County is an active and desirable market. This is especially true for retail and restaurants. This objective also seeks to provide pre-qualified development sites for high priority target industries. This will provide additional value-added evidence that Stafford is a high quality location for business expansion and new company locations.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors interviews, EDA, and developers/brokers.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Using the existing Economic Development Department's database of buildings and sites inventory; the available properties; and assess the site ready status of each. Then, meet with the property owners/brokers to discuss their development plans: do they want to sell or lease their property; are they interested in being a development partner; and are there known issues or constraints with their property?

**Optimum Outcome:** Increased inventory of shovel ready sites with interested owners/brokers to present to prospective companies, developers and site selection consultants. This larger inventory can also become the cornerstone of a new marketing objective for the VEDP as well as FRA activities, retail/restaurant attraction and other marketing activities.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Continue to inventory active sites and underutilized buildings in the County, particularly those located in the Redevelopment Areas.
- Review properties and rank the properties based upon their overall ease and speed of being shovel ready.
- Meet with top ranked property owners to discuss their overall plans for their property, their ability/willingness to invest, and their level of interest in participating in development projects.

**Support Entities:** GIS, Planning and Zoning, Public Works, and Utilities.



**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:**

- GIS: Related mapping.
- Planning and Zoning and Public Works: Development process guidance.
- Utilities: Water and sewer availability guidance.

**Time Commitment:** Two-three months to execute, then ongoing. This objective will require a sustained effort reaching out to property owners, reviewing properties and then meeting with the property owners. Following the initial set-up, the time commitment will be low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** None.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** The inventory and associated updating procedures have already begun.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Work to increase the number of shovel-ready sites by 4 each year.
- A list of pre-qualified/pre-certified sites for specific target industry clusters.
- Identification of site selection consultants for each target area.
- At least one proactive site selection consultant contact per quarter.
- At least one site visit by a site selection consultant a year.

Objective T-3. Enhance Utility and Road Infrastructure Serving Key Commercial and Industrial Sites

**Introduction/Overview:** Throughout the County there are a number of high potential commercially zoned parcels that are not adequately served by public utilities (water, sewer and transportation). As noted in Objective T-2, the development window is typically short and does not have the ability to absorb a long process of extending utilities significant distances. The benefit of this objective is





to both provide more utility accessibility and thus open up additional lands for commercial development within the Urban Service Area. Another important benefit is by enhancing utility infrastructure in specific places and the Redevelopment Areas, the County can guide development where it wants it to go and thereby be able to maintain open spaces and natural areas, an important guideline mentioned in the Board of Supervisors interviews. The key stakeholder interviews also identified transportation issues as potential constraints to economic development. This objective is to also address traffic and transportation issues by assessing their impacts on economic growth and sustained business activity, and then craft an objective to alleviate these issues. This is aimed at reducing or eliminating transportation issues and thereby increasing business activity, business attraction, tourism and job growth.

**Origin:** Key stakeholder interviews, primarily developers and brokers and staff.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Mid-term.

**Approach Overview:** Through the T-2 Objective of identifying key development sites and based on the current commercial/industrial landscape in the County, identify those areas of greatest potential or catalytic benefit for utility infrastructure enhancement.

**Optimum Outcome:** Objectives to be used by the Public Works and Utilities Departments during their capital improvements programming activities to enhance and extend transportation, water and sewer service to high potential economic development target

areas of the County. Through this process, specific issues, projects, and development areas should be identified. A key outcome will be an inventory of key transportation, water and sewer issues and constraints that are adversely affecting businesses in the County, tourism and overall economic growth.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development, Public Works, and Utilities Departments, and County Administration.



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**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Building off Objective T-2, identify key sites/areas of the County currently underserved with utilities.
- Identify which sites/areas have public/private partnership potentials.
- Building off other interview/key stakeholder sessions, identify the key traffic transportation issues facing business and business development.
- Prepare data, mapping, and related analyses. Review this list and classify the issues by level of severity, (high, medium, low and perceived).
- For the high level issues, work with the appropriate County/state officials to investigate possible remediation actions.
- Continue to review the CIP budget process to determine the best timing of improvements and work to advance CIP projects that require more immediate attention.
- Where state or private activity is required or significant public investment, engage a transportation economics consultant to calculate the cost-benefit of the improvement and economic and fiscal benefits to the County of investing to improve the transportation issue.

**Support Entities:** Board of Supervisors and Utilities Commission.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:**

- Implement the objectives herein that relate to the preparation and development of buildings and sites.
- Review recommendations of staff and execute changes to the Utilities capital improvement program to bring infrastructure more quickly.

**Time Commitment:** Low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low to identify issues, moderate to high to engage a transportation consultant for further study; high to very high to implement transportation improvements.

**Variables:** None.

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**Existing Conditions:** Limited funding for constructing utilities and roads buildout.

**Measures/metrics:**

- Identification of sites/areas in the County to target for utility infrastructure enhancement.
- Increase the number of commercially zoned properties with adequate infrastructure to the site by 2%-3% annually.
- Inventory of transportation/traffic issues.
- Continue efforts to incorporate changes into the CIP or state transportation plan, as warranted.

*Objective T-4\*. Continue Business Retention and Expansion and Workforce Preparedness Efforts*

**Introduction/Overview:** Especially in tough economic times, retaining and growing existing businesses is extremely important to economic health of the County and diversification of the economic base. Due to this importance, the Stafford County Board of Supervisors established the first business retention and expansion (BRE) program in the Region in 2007. This program benefits the County by improving the understanding of the local business and industry base in the County, identifying those businesses and industries that are either at risk or expanding, assessing their needs, and seeking to assist them in order to keep them in Stafford County.

This Objective also includes the Stafford Workforce & Education Partnership (SWEP). Created in 2010, SWEP educates businesses about existing educational opportunities and new industry-specific, customized courses available to the Stafford business community. By making relevant professional training resources available to residents beginning at the secondary education level, Stafford's employees are better suited to meet local workforce needs. SWEP also partners with the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber's Workforce NOW Board to offer a series of events over the summer months.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors interviews and staff.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Ongoing.



**Approach Overview:** The approach to this task is to visit businesses in Stafford County to develop an understanding of those businesses and industries are either at risk, or expanding, understanding their needs and attempting to assist them in order to retain or expand them in the County.

**Optimum Outcome:** The optimum outcome of this goal would be a common understanding of the local business and industry base in the region, their needs (expansion, workforce, funding, etc.) and continued support needed to assist businesses with remaining or expanding in the Stafford economy.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Assess the current BRE program for its effectiveness.
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- If possible, reach out to companies that have left the County to understand the business relocation decision process, understand if there were things that the County could have done to keep them and follow up, if appropriate, with County staff on these relocations.

**Support Entities:** Planning and Zoning, Finance and Public Works.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:**

- Support the efforts of the BRE program by being responsive to existing company needs.
- Fast track approvals through the process when appropriate and providing a clear path of review, project refinement and final approval. If it is deemed easier for a company to move out of the County, and if the potential new location is offering incentives, it will be that much more important to provide expedient and efficient assistance to Economic Development in retaining and expanding existing businesses.

**Time Commitment:** High.

**Additional Staff:** Depending on the BRE approach taken, a fully integrated BRE program can take from half to two full-time employees, especially if the interviews are conducted directly by the BRE staff on-site.



**Budget Implications:** Depending on the staffing of the effort and the activities that are incorporated into the greater BRE effort, costs could be low to moderate. For instance, BRE programs often include quarterly or semi-annual meetings or open house sessions where County companies gather to hear speakers and network, quite often with referrals from the BRE coordinator who has identified possible B-2-B synergies.

**Variables:** Complexities of the program.

**Existing Conditions:** A sound BRE program already exists.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Increase company visitations each year by 5% over the previous year.
- Seek to respond to all company inquiries within one day with an acknowledgment of any issues.
- Respond to all companies within 48 hours of the visit with a preliminary concept for resolution of any company issue.

*Objective T-5. Work to Increase Broadband Availability, Especially in Redevelopment Areas*

**Introduction/Overview:** The purpose is to provide not only greater access to internet/broadband across the County, but also increase the speed and reliability as well. While broadband can be found throughout the County, its speed and reliability is inconsistent throughout the County. By increasing the speed, availability and reliability of internet/broadband, Stafford County will be more attractive to companies looking to relocate especially Federal government contractors and other companies located in the greater Washington DC Metropolitan Area.

**Origin:** EDA and key stakeholder interviews.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Building upon the 2014 broadband survey, conduct an analysis of current broadband access and availability throughout the County, particularly in the Redevelopment Areas and other high potential business development areas. To minimize the cost and staff commitment, and to reduce the overall time in the effort, work with outside entities that specializes in broadband assessments and review, such as the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT).



**Optimum Outcome:** A comprehensive broadband strategic plan to provide broadband throughout the County, focusing on the commercial areas and Redevelopment Areas. This Broadband Strategic Plan would engage broadband providers, infrastructure assets, commercial land owners and brokers, development partners and others engaged in providing quality buildings and sites and growing the Stafford business base.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Coordinate and support the work of CIT Broadband in preparing a Broadband Assessment and Recommendation package for Stafford County.
- Accelerate planning and actions providing focus and direction for expanding broadband access and improving utilization.
- Leverage all the data, information, tools and resources to perform an assessment and provide high-level recommendations based on that assessment.
- The assessment would have breadth but not full depth.
- The CIT Broadband team provides broadband consultation services and has the knowledge, experience, methodology and tools to perform a comprehensive assessment of existing services, assets and infrastructure to guide the development of a strategic broadband plan for the County. The team leverages the Commonwealth's proven Broadband Toolkit methodology in concert with Virginia's broadband mapping data and broadband deployment planning tools.
- CIT will assess coverage, types of access available both in regards to technology and speed, amount of competition among providers, amount of access available to schools, libraries and health care providers, upstream broadband access, redundancy and some assessment of utilization in regards to available digital literacy training and possibly adoption of digital learning technologies.
- CIT will Identify gaps in broadband service, identify key vertical assets that could address un-served/under-served areas, provide funding options for new

infrastructure, define objectives for partnering with incumbent providers and document methods for addressing broadband awareness and adoption to improve utilization for all citizens.

**Support Entities:** University of Mary Washington Transformation 2020 partners and CIT.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Oversee and coordinate the work of the CIT consultants in their review of broadband infrastructure. Facilitate access to regional broadband providers.

**Time Commitment:** Low. Support the CIT consultant.

Additional Staff: None.

**Budget Implications:** Low. The initial CIT study is provided as a service of CIT at no cost to Stafford County.

**Variables:** The implementation of the Broadband Objective could have budget implications if the desire is to connect to public/County properties or to open up areas for economic development. The preferred solution to budget issues would be public/private partnerships and private developer participation. These budget implications cannot be determined until the Broadband Strategic Plan is complete.

**Existing Conditions:** None.

**Measures/Metrics:** Completion of a Broadband Strategic Plan which includes action steps to extend broadband throughout the County. Detailed measures/metrics should be determined after the assessment has taken place and be included in the Broadband Strategic Plan.

*Objective T-6\*: Leverage the Regional Industry Cluster Analysis to Refine Marketing Efforts*

**Introduction/Overview:** The interviews conducted as a part of this *Strategic Action Plan* presented consensus across a majority of those interviewed that strengthening and diversifying the economic base was a key issue. Many companies and jobs in Stafford County are related, directly or indirectly, to the operations and missions on the Marine Corps Base Quantico, including Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation training, lab, hostage rescue teams, NCIS, Defense Intelligence Agency and others. As the STRC Initiative report and recent reports from Congress have stated, another round of BRAC has not yet been determined. But if another round is announced, MCBQ will likely be





fairly safe. However, military and national security budgets are already declining near term and are having an effect on contractors and suppliers located within the County.

The Fredericksburg Regional Alliance sponsored a study to identify competitive industry clusters. Industry clusters are concentrations of interdependent firms and industries that do business with each other. These linked firms have common needs for infrastructure, talent, and technology. This objective also seeks to attract companies through refined marketing efforts to locate within Stafford.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisor, EDA, Stakeholder and staff interviews.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Based upon regional input-output table analysis supported by the computer software IMPLAN Pro, the FRA study identified 15 preliminary industry clusters in the region. Using a weighted-evaluation model, Chmura Economics and Analytics (FRA's contractor) identified six priority industry clusters worth targeting in economic development. These clusters include (1) business services, (2) information/communication, (3) health and life sciences, (4) finance, insurance and real estate, (5) manufacturing, and (6) public administration. A climate-capabilities matrix further refined the six cluster targets by evaluating the sectors within each. This sorted the sectors into four opportunity segments which consider the external (national) business environment as well as sector performance at the regional level. Moving forward it is important to identify companies with Stafford ties either in terms of employment base or senior leadership. Once identified, these firms should be contacted to understand locational needs, reasons why they are located in the Washington metropolitan area and other business location factors. If a total relocation is not feasible, a satellite location should be proposed to reduce commuting of non-essential Washington metropolitan located employees.

**Optimum Outcome:** Additional strategic marketing approaches at the regional and local level adapted to ensure limited marketing budgets can be strategically used in pursuit of new business. Increased development/new company marketing leads as well as greater exposure in FRA and VEDP marketing efforts. The ultimate outcome is to attract stable companies with high paying jobs.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.



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***Activities of the Lead Entity:***

- Incorporate the guidance and objectives described in the FRA Industry Cluster Analysis that work to attract business based upon known County strengths into the Marketing Plan.
- Continue to partner with the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance and by extension, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).
- Continue to meet with the VEDP quarterly and FRA monthly to understand what they are pursuing and the industry sectors and client types from whom they are receiving the most interest. In these sessions, it will also be important to present to the VEDP/FRA reps the actions, initiatives and projects ongoing in Stafford, and new sites that have become available.
- Identification and recruitment of companies located in Washington metropolitan area with strong Stafford ties.
- Identify brokers active in the greater DC market, especially those that work with GSA clients.
- Understand the gaps and issues with relocation of companies from the DC Beltway market to Stafford.
- Refine the marketing strategy accordingly.

***Support Entities:*** FRA and VEDP.

***Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:*** The VEDP, in particular, has a far greater reach than is possible for any locality and attends national trade conferences, international trade conferences and hosts international trade missions. They are also a key “go to” site for companies and site selection consultants seeking new/expansion site locations. The benefit is to increase the leads and prospects through VEDP and FRA efforts.

***Time Commitment:*** Moderate. While this function has an inherent significant time commitment, Economic Development Department staff is already doing much of this work. Continue bi-monthly updates and quarterly in-person meetings. This objective will also take significant new time to create opportunities to find and meet target companies. Many of the previous objectives that incorporated B-



2-B sessions, workforce training and other business support services can be data-mined for potential companies.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:** Future budgets may need to include monies for expanded community marketing.

Existing Conditions: Work is ongoing.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Increase attraction marketing leads by 5%.
- Quarterly meetings with VEDP.
- Documented inclusion of Stafford marketing materials in VEDP marketing program and elsewhere.
- Participation in VEDP marketing missions.
- Establish a system to locate and cultivate companies now located in Washington metropolitan area.

*Objective T-7. Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Toolbox*

**Introduction/Overview:** The purpose of this objective is to strengthen the Economic Development Toolbox used to expand and attract companies by identifying and considering economic development incentives that are being used in peer/competitive counties as well as best practice incentive programs. This enhanced economic development toolbox will allow Economic Development staff to have a competitive and comprehensive set of tools at their disposal in building competitive attraction/retention packages. Many of the communities that Stafford is in competition with for new company attractions, as well as company retention efforts are using incentives. Currently, Stafford County has a flexible and comprehensive incentive program and handles project incentives on an ad-hoc basis. This objective does not suggest that all incentives should be on the table and offered to all prospects initially, far from it. However, the benefit of this objective is having a defined program that describes the potential incentives, assists the BoS in making economic development decisions, allows Economic Development



staff latitude in deal making and where appropriate, provides information and guidance to the prospect company or site selection consultant when shopping potential locations.

**Origin:** Key stakeholder interviews, primarily developers and brokers.

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Review the peer communities and Best Practices analyses found in the Technical Appendix to identify the breadth and scope of incentives that are successfully being implemented for economic development purposes. This universe of incentive options would be reviewed with the EDA and BoS's Community and Economic Development Committee and a preferred set of incentives identified for inclusion in the Economic Development Toolbox would be crafted.

**Optimum Outcome:** A list of economic development incentives that have overall buy-in from the Board of Supervisors and other key stakeholders for inclusion in the Economic Development Toolbox, some of which could be offered administratively.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Review the peer County and Best Practice incentives Technical Appendix.
- Identify those incentives that are most applicable for Stafford County.
- Review incentives with the EDA and BoS's Community and Economic Development Committee to identify those that will achieve Board of Supervisors approval.
- Formalize the list of incentives to be included in the Toolbox.

**Support Entities:** EDA and Board of Supervisor's Community and Economic Development Committee.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:**

- Review the Best Practices/peer County incentives Technical Appendix.
- Review the incentive program recommendations of Economic Development staff.
- Discuss the pros and cons, usage policies, need for BoS approval, and other related issues.
- Finalize a competitive incentives program.

**Time Commitment:** Low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low – medium depending upon the level of effort selected.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** None.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Identification of specific incentive and tools to be included in an Economic Development Toolbox.
- Attraction/expansion of companies in Stafford, utilizing the Toolbox and incentives as appropriate, in economic development marketing to grown existing business or attract new businesses.
- Increase the number of incentives offered to support expansion and attraction efforts.
- More specific metrics will be identified at a later date.

#### 4.5.2 High Priority Objectives

These objective recommendations should be acted on as staff and resources are available and will have a significant impact on enhancing economic development in the County. These objectives will not be reliant on other activities or have pre-existing conditions that must be met before they are undertaken.

High Priority Objectives include:

Objective	Description
Objective H-1*	Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants
Objective H-2*	Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars

Objective H-3	Support Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network
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*Note: Not ranked in priority order.*

*Objective H-1\*. Continue Efforts to Attract Upscale Retail and Restaurants*



**Introduction/Overview:** According to the Retail Study conducted in 2012 and supplemental analysis conducted for this *Strategic Action Plan*, there is significant retail and restaurant spending potential of Stafford residents leaving the County and being spent elsewhere. During nearly all of the key stakeholder interviews the discussion of the need for upscale retail and restaurants was mentioned.

As a part of this *Strategic Action Plan* process a public information meeting was held to discuss the particular retail establishments and restaurants that are in highest demand. This "Retail Forum" is more fully summarized in the Technical Report, under separate cover.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors, EDA, Retail Forum

**Priority/Timing:** High priority / Mid-term.

**Approach Overview:** Continue retail attraction efforts. Implement other objectives in this *Strategic Action Plan* to make the County more attractive to retailers and restaurants, showing that sites are available, workforce training is available and other related development is happening.

**Optimum Outcome:** The location of new upscale/national and local specialty retail establishments and restaurants within Stafford County.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Authority and Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:** Follow the objectives described in the 2012 Retail Study.

**Support Entities:** Planning and Zoning Department.

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**Activities of the Support Entity:**

- Support efforts and work with prospect companies providing information on County locations.
- Once the lead becomes a qualified prospect, enter into the existing prospect/recruitment process.

**Time Commitment:** Moderate/Ongoing.

Additional Staff: None.

**Budget Implications:** Moderate/Continued funding of marketing efforts and participation at ICSC conferences with ambassadors.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** None, although the implementation of the Top Priority objectives will make the County more attractive to new business development.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Location of upscale 5 new retail/restaurants in Stafford County in the next 2-3 years.
- Attend ICSC and other national conferences on retail/restaurant industry, building relationships with industry leaders twice a year.

[Objective H-2\\*. Conduct Economic Development Best Practices Seminars/Forums](#)

**Introduction/Overview:** Many of those interviewed felt more training and awareness of economic development funding was needed to fully leverage existing financing and funding, economic development initiatives and other programming in the Stafford region. A variety of excellent training opportunities are currently available through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) that supports this goal. The Economic Development Department works closely with the SBDC and provides meeting space for SBDC staff to use to expand awareness of SBDC programs that support business needs. There is also potential to provide training on best practices in zoning, planning, and the permitting process to better inform businesses of review and permitting processes.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors

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**Priority/Timing:** High priority / Mid-term.

**Approach Overview:** Topics should include financing/funding objectives, target marketing, business retention and expansion (BRE), redevelopment and others.

**Optimum Outcome:** Greater participation in educational and training classes offered in the region. Provide training opportunities on economic development, zoning, planning and permitting processes to better inform businesses.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Identify areas of economic development that the Board/EDA or other Key Stakeholders would like to learn more about.
- Work with the support entities to identify appropriate session leaders to run the training. IEDC is also a source.
- Arrange for training/education seminars/forums.

**Support Entities:** Chamber, SBDC, GCC, SBA

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Support the effort, promote, attend and present at education sessions.

**Time Commitment:** Moderate. Events will need to be planned, speakers recruited and programs developed.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Variable.

**Variables:** The number of events and whether any of the speakers/presenters require fees.

**Existing Conditions:** None.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Hold at least one session every quarter.

Objective H-3\*. Support the Development of an Angel/Venture Capital Network

**Introduction/Overview:** Building off and leveraging Objective T-6, support the growth and expansion of private funding for entrepreneurship and small business development. Small companies and new



company start-ups often lack not only the funding to get their businesses off the ground, but the collateral or history to secure conventional business funding. It is important in the development and support of small/new businesses to have an active Angel community and Venture Capital network. Angel investors are often retired entrepreneurs or executives, who may be interested in angel investing for reasons that go beyond pure monetary return. In addition to angel investing, equity crowd-funding and other seed funding options, venture capital is attractive for new companies with limited operating history that are too small to raise capital in the public markets and have not reached the point where they are able to secure a bank loan or complete a debt offering.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors, EDA

**Priority/Timing:** High priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Work with the University of Mary Washington SBDC, Northern Virginia chapter of SCORE, private developers active in Stafford, local banks and the Chamber to pull together key stakeholders needed to build a network of Angel investors, venture capitalists and local banks that are interested in funding small business. Using national resources (including the Angel Capital Association and the Angel Resource Institute), begin to pull together the planning, resources and objective to create a small business funding network in the Stafford County region.

**Optimum Outcome:** An active small business/entrepreneurial funding network that will support the growth of small companies in need in the County.

**Lead Entity:** University of Mary Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Identify the current funding/programs available to assist small businesses.
- Working with banks, successful entrepreneurs, the SBDC and national agencies, identify potential Angel and Venture Capital networks for Stafford.
- Produce marketing materials that present the strength of the Stafford market, industry base, educational assets and other economic development assets that are needed for small business growth and support.



- Reach out to the Angel/VC contacts and invite them to Stafford to get familiar with the County. If appropriate, line up meetings with existing companies and entrepreneurial assets.

**Support Entities:** Area banks and entrepreneurial support entities.

Activities of the Support Entity/Entities: Support the efforts of UMW SBDC.

**Time Commitment:** Moderate to high. This effort will take considerable time and effort to reach out and identify Angel investors, VCs and local banks. Once identified, each group will have to be sold on the value of investing in Stafford-based small companies and startups.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:** Many depending upon which type of investment mechanism is considered.

**Existing Conditions:** Implementation of Objective T-6 is preferred but not required.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Development of an active small business funding program.
- Funding of Stafford companies.
- Host at least one forum/summit on funding per year.

#### 4.5.3 Priority Objectives

These objective recommendations are important to the overall growth and stability of economic development in the County, but have a lower catalytic impact, are longer term in nature or require other conditions of implementation of future objectives.

Objective	Description
Objective P-1*	Explore Other Opportunity Areas for Economic Development
Objective P-2*	Continue to Enhance the Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and Fire/Rescue

Objective P-3	Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Website
Objective P-4*	Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations
Objective P-5*	Evaluate Economic Development Staffing

*Note: Not ranked in priority order.*

*Objective P-1\*. Explore Other Important Areas of Opportunity for Economic Development*

**Introduction/Overview:** The purpose of this objective is to continue to seek out areas of opportunity for business development. Two such areas of interest are the waterfront and the Stafford Regional Airport. For each, there are issues and constraints that prevent them from being near term development sites.



Opening these areas up for development will increase the variety of development sites and be attractive to companies that are not now considering Stafford County due to its lack of diverse inventory. The most significant constraint regarding development along the waterfront is the significant amount of waterfront that is in conservation districts along the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers where commercial development is not allowed. Many of the sites along the waterfront outside the conservation districts have inadequate road access or other infrastructure. The area around the airport has two development constraints, airport aviation easement restrictions and lack of sewer infrastructure. This area is currently outside of the four redevelopment areas.

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The benefit to this objective is to fully capture the development of two significant Stafford County assets, assets that peer communities are effectively using for economic development attraction.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors, EDA, Stakeholder interviews.

**Priority/Timing:** Priority Objective / long-term.

**Approach Overview:** Identify sites in both the airport area and along the riverfront (not in conservation districts), present to CEDC and upon concurrence make contact with the property owners. Following the same methodology laid out in Objective T-2 above, seek to understand the site development constraints, the development interest/acumen of the property owner and their interest/ability in investing in their property.

**Optimum Outcome:** A long-term objective to provide development sites around the airport and in proximity to the waterfront.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development

Activities of the Lead Entity:

- Seek to identify the development issues and constraints surrounding areas along the waterfront and in proximity to the airport
- Reach out to the subject property owners to understand their interest in commercial development on their property
- Work with those property owners interested to assess the key constraints with the development of their properties and add them to the commercial real estate database, if not already included
- Provide guidance and support in assisting the property owners' efforts to ready their properties for commercial development.

**Support Entities:** Planning and Zoning, Public Works, others.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Support the efforts of the lead, as necessary.

**Time Commitment:** Low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:**

**Existing Conditions:** Interest and ability of the private property owners to improve their properties to “shovel ready” condition.

Measures/Metrics:

- Identify development issues and constraints surrounding areas along the waterfront and in proximity to the airport.
- Reach out to the subject property owners to understand their interest in commercial development on their property.
- Work with those property owners interested in assessing the key constraints to the development of their properties and add them to the commercial real estate database, if not already included.
- Provide guidance and support in assisting the property owners’ efforts to ready their properties for commercial development.

*Objective P-2\*. Continue to Enhance Coordination between Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, Public Works & Fire/Rescue, and the Business Community*

**Introduction/Overview:** In the interviews conducted for this project, it was suggested that better coordination and communication was needed between the various County departments involved in economic development. The benefit of this type of engagement is to more fully integrate the planning, infrastructure planning, capital improvement planning



and other issues of County-wide importance. This Objective also builds upon the past good efforts that resulted in the creation of the Ombudsman position and the Community Development Service Center (CDSC) with further review to refine the development approval process to ensure that Stafford County is seen as open for business with a clearly understandable development process. The need for this objective arises from the key stakeholder interviews that almost universally recognized the

improvement in the development process over the last few years, but equally recognized the need for continued improvement and refinement. The existing process is still seen as overly cumbersome and complicated.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors

**Priority/Timing:** Priority Objective / Ongoing.

**Approach Overview:** Each applicable County department has assigned a representative to participate in bi-weekly meetings with the Ombudsman to review the status of all commercial, industrial and public improvements projects. The results of these meetings are then reviewed with the applicable Department Directors and County Administration to ensure County staff is following all required rules and procedures and no delays are being caused by the County's review process.

**Optimum Outcome:** Better coordination throughout County departments in planning and economic development.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development and development-related Departments and the Ombudsman.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Present the concept to the County departments and seek buy-in. Seek volunteers from each department to participate in the quarterly meetings.
- Host and attend monthly Coordination Committee meetings.
- Identify the key planning and related issues and any resolutions.

**Support Entities:** Planning and Zoning, Public Works, others.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Support the efforts of the lead, as necessary.

**Time Commitment:** Low. No more than two hours per month, per department, for meetings. Staff needs for follow-up on activities that come out of the meetings, determined on an as needed basis.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** None.

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**Measures/Metrics:**

- Regular meetings, at least monthly, to discuss relevant economic development issues internally, quarterly meetings with new businesses to refine the process as needed.
- Project-specific meetings as needed.

*Objective P-3\*: Continue to Enhance the Economic Development Website*

**Introduction/Overview:** The purpose of this objective is to reinforce the need to keep the economic development website up to date, fresh and designed to focus on those things of most interest to the development community. The current website, while efficiently designed and well laid out, can always be improved. The benefit is to have a world class website that makes it easy to navigate, gather information on the economic conditions, available commercial real estate base, incentive programs and other key information sought by site selection consultants and companies interested in a Stafford County location.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors, EDA

**Priority/Timing:** Top priority / Short-term.

**Approach Overview:** Staff continuously checks all website content and performs a comprehensive review quarterly. Staff also routinely visits other economic development websites to ensure our content and layout remains current.

**Optimum Outcome:** An updated website maintained on a regular basis that promotes the latest and greatest information on the County.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Continue to monitor and update the economic development website.
- Promote active incentives (Tech Zone, no BPOL) through project examples.
- Scan peer Community websites and IEDC Best Practice websites for additional ideas.
- Link and collaborate with tourism, historic and Chamber websites.

- Coordinate and communicate with the FRA and VEDP to present comparable data, ensure the message is consistent and links are accurate.

**Support Entities:** Development partners.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** Provide site content and input as requested.

**Time Commitment:** Low. Likely 1-2 days a month.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** Existing website and maintenance procedures established and in effect.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- The website is checked continuously for broken links, which are fixed when found or deleted from the website if no longer in service.
- The website is checked continuously for dated material, which is removed.
- Feature or high priority material is added to the website when identified. This would include, for example, links to prominent newspaper articles.
- Routine/general website content is refreshed quarterly to ensure it does not become stale.

*Objective P-4\*. Promote Mixed-Use Development around Redevelopment Area Gateways and Possibly VRE Stations*

**Introduction/Overview:** There is an opportunity to promote transit oriented development (TOD) around Virginia Railway Express (VRE) stations in Stafford County. There are two stations in Stafford that are surrounded by land in private ownerships with potential for development. These stations are the Leeland Station and the Brooke Station. The enhanced development potential of TOD allow for higher densities, a reduced need for parking and greater walkability.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors interviews.

**Priority/Timing:** Priority Objective / long-term.

**Approach Overview:** This Objective supports the key recommendation of the *Master Redevelopment Plan* to encourage mixed-use development within the four Redevelopment Areas. The *Master Redevelopment Plan* recommends higher density, mixed-use development to foster the creation of a sense of place. As an example, during the public reviews of the Courthouse Redevelopment Plan, citizens routinely suggested the Courthouse area could be transformed into a Town of Stafford. This requires a much higher intensity of development to provide the critical mass necessary for a robust 24-7 community center.

**Optimum Outcome:** A development objective to identify and promote high density mixed-use development within the Redevelopment Areas, and possibly around the VRE stations as well.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Inventory the active sites and underutilized buildings within a half mile of each of the VRE stations. Each property should be included in the building and sites inventory.

**Support Entities:** None.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** None.

**Time Commitment:** Low. Two-three months to get established, then ongoing. This objective will require a sustained effort in the first two to three months in reaching out to the property owners, reviewing the survey returns and then meeting with the property owners. Following the initial set-up, the time commitment will be low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Moderate. Beyond staff time, there are no foreseen costs in this objective.

**Variables:** None.

**Existing Conditions:** None.

**Measures/Metrics:** Advance research to the CEDC for inclusion in future Comprehensive Plan updates.





Objective P-5\* Evaluate Economic Development Staffing

**Introduction/Overview:** Economic development is a hands-on activity where personal contacts and relationship building are the crux of a successful program. It is difficult to build and nurture these relationships with limited staff and budget resources. Review staffing and budget so that resources required to address the needs of the catalytic projects, expand the retention/expansion functions, attract new companies including restaurant and retail and thereby diversify the economic base by providing opportunities for new high paying jobs and reducing the out-commute of the workforce to the Washington DC Metropolitan Area, are sufficient.

**Origin:** Board of Supervisors interviews and peer county review.

**Priority/Timing:** Priority / mid-term.

**Approach Overview:** The *Strategic Action Plan* update focused on identifying departmental responsibilities, staff roles and budget levels of the peer counties at a high-level. This Objective recommends a departmental operations analysis be performed to identify the resources required to address the needs of the catalytic projects, expand the retention/expansion functions and attract new companies.

**Optimum Outcome:** A better understanding of Stafford economic development resources in context with other competitive localities. The following table presents FY-2015 economic development staffing levels and the 2014 population for each of the peer communities as reported on the surveys distributed for this update. As noted in the surveys, the functions of the peer counties varied widely. While some were only responsible for economic development activities, others included tourism and other functions. To achieve a side-by-side comparison, staffing numbers were adjusted so that only staffing dedicated to economic development activities were included. In the case of Stafford County, staffing in support of Tourism and general County administration was removed.

Peer County	FY-2015 Staffing	2014 Population
Stafford County <sup>1</sup>	4.5	136,260
Albemarle County <sup>2</sup>	3	104,503
Fairfax County <sup>3</sup>	46	1,112,266

Peer County	FY-2015 Staffing	2014 Population
Fauquier County <sup>4</sup>	4	67,466
Hanover County <sup>5</sup>	5	102,863
Henrico County	7	318,111
King George County	1	24,907
Loudoun County	20	352,138
Prince William County	12	429,864
Spotsylvania County	6	126,028

Notes:

1. Stafford adjusted to remove 1/2 of the Deputy County Administrator.
2. Albemarle reported they have two full-time employees. However, an additional position, an Economic Development Director, will be added April 1, 2015.
3. Fairfax is an Economic Development Authority with national and international staff.
4. Fauquier reports three full-time employees and roughly ½ the population of Stafford.
5. Hanover has roughly the same level of staffing as Stafford but their budget is about 40% larger while their population is about 25% less.

It is readily apparent from this very basic analysis that each of the peer communities has widely differing economic development endeavors. It may be helpful, if desired, to evaluate staff, roles, responsibilities and budget resources in a more detailed way to determine how Stafford relates in a competitive environment.

**Lead Entity:** Economic Development Department.

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**Activities of the Lead Entity:**

- Review the peer County staff/budget assessment developed as a part of this *Strategic Action Plan*
- Identify the preferred staff/budget levels for the economic development department

**Support Entities:** None.

**Activities of the Support Entity/Entities:** None.

**Time Commitment:** Low.

**Additional Staff:** None.

**Budget Implications:** Low.

**Variables:** Many.

**Existing Conditions:** Peer County staffing and budget review.

**Measures/Metrics:**

- Complete a systematic evaluation of County economic development resources compared to its peer counties.
- Review the peer county analysis of economic development staff/budgets every 2 years and report to the CEDC.

*4.5.4 Other Economic Development Objectives – Support and Assist*

There are a number of objective elements that are important to economic development, business retention/support and business attraction that are not directly under the purview of the Economic Development Department. This section describes those objectives using the same criteria as used above for the Primary Economic Development Objectives. The main difference being the role of the Stafford Economic Development Department is to support and provide assistance where needed to other County departments or partner entities. These objectives include:

Objective	Description	Lead Entity
Objective O-1*	Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95	DPW/DOT
Objective O-2	Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS	MCBQ
Objective O-3*	Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ	Chamber of Commerce/SBDC
Objective O-4	Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTND)	Planning
Objective O-5*	Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Plan	Tourism
Objective O-6	Develop a Hub of Innovation through GCC/UMW	Germannan Community College
Objective O-7*	Support Enhanced Coordination of K-12 → STEM → GCC → UMW	Stafford Public Schools

*Objective O-1\*. Create Better Visual Impact Signage from I-95*

The I-95 corridor through the County is heavily wooded and minimally signed, which provides an important noise and visual buffer between the highway and the County, but at the same time it impedes the view of an active commercial core and community with strong historical and cultural assets.

*Objective O-2. Support MCBQ in Future BRAC Rounds through Implementation of JLUS*

The Marine Corps Base, FBI, and DHS activities at MCBQ are a very important component of the Stafford economy and will remain as such in the future. While many of the objectives recommended in this *Strategic Action Plan* seek to diversify the County's economic base, the operations at MCBQ will remain an important foundation of the economy. The latest rounds of BRAC, sequestration and changing political positions on the breadth and depth of DoD/DHS activities require that the MCBQ be prepared for a future BRAC round. While the latest National Defense Authorization Act legislation unveiled



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December 2, 2014 rejected the Defense Department's request for a round of base closures in 2017, it is fully expected that Congress will change their position and a new BRAC round could happen soon. Implement JLUS recommendations.

*Objective O-3\*. Support DoD B-2-B Forums to Connect Local Companies to MCBQ*

Through both the BoS interviews and key stakeholder interviews, the need was identified for greater connections between Stafford business, and particularly the MCBQ contractors and other Stafford companies. In support of both diversifying the economy and further supporting the Base from future BRAC actions, is connecting DoD contractors and MCBQ mission to local companies. The purpose of this objective is to create a B-2-B (business-to-business) network of Stafford companies that will create synergies between the companies, lead to more business activity in the County and thus job growth, while strengthening the overall economic base.

*Objective O-4. Assess Current Zoning Categories and Processes (Form-based Codes, PTNDs)*

In discussions with Economic Development Department staff and through the inter-departmental meetings outlined above, zoning issues that are a constraint to business expansion within the County or new business attraction should be identified. Issues with the current development approval process would not fall under this objective as these are addressed above. The focus here is to identify new or modified zoning categories or classifications that will allow for greater development flexibility while ensuring proper zoning and development control for the County.

*Objective O-5\*. Develop a Unified and Coordinated Tourism Objective*

Seek to improve coordination between the various county and regional activities in marketing the tourism assets of Stafford County and the greater Stafford area. This coordinated objective can then provide consistent messaging and marketing and can provide important information to the state for the tourism marketing and economic development marketing.



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*Objective O-6. Develop a Hub of Innovation through Germanna Community College/University of Mary Washington and Others*

A long-term objective to develop a GCC Campus in Stafford and continued implementation of the STRC Initiative are important precursors to developing a Hub of Innovation. This would be focused around the hospital, Germanna Community College's Allied Health offerings, and new medical office buildings and other related development in the Courthouse area and in Boswell's Corner.

*Objective O-7\*. Support Enhanced Coordination of K-12 → STEM → GCC → UMW*

There is a need to support and enhance the coordination between K-12 education, community college education, and the STEM education programs. While this is outside the purview of economic development, it is nevertheless important to continue to support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to build a strong base for Stafford students. Economic development should support this effort through targeted facilitation of training/education programs, workforce preparedness, SWEP, BRE employment issues, and other related objectives.